

CDC

MONTE HALE

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

Nº84

Monte Hale

10¢

WESTERN



MONTE HALE
THE **BIGGEST AND BOLDEST**
REAL-LIFE COWBOY OF THEM ALL
6 ft. 5 in. OF SOLID MUSCLE

WANTED
THE
OUTLAW TRIO



CACTUS



NOTHING CHEAP ABOUT HIM!

(SIGH) HYAR COMES ANNABELLE! (SIGH) GOSH, SHE SHORE IS PURTY!



HOWDY, ANNABELLE!

H'YA, CACTUSBRAIN! WHUT ARE YUH DOING 'ROUND HYAR THIS TIME OF DAY?



I GOT A PRESENT FER YUH!

A PRESENT?



THET'S RIGHT! WE'RE ENGAGED SO I BOUGHT A DIAMOND RING FER YUH!

A DIAMOND RING!



I HOPE IT'S NOT A CHEAP IMITATION!

CHEAP IMITATION NOTHING ---



---THET'S THE MOST EXPENSIVE IMITATION I COULD BUY!





ATOMIC MOUSE ★ BADGE OF JUSTICE ★ BLUE BEETLE ★ COWBOY LOVE ★ COWBOY WESTERN ★ DANGER and ADVENTURE ★ FUNNY ANIMALS—MERRY MAILMAN ★ GABBY HAYES ★ HOT RODS and RACING CARS ★ LASH LARUE ★ MONTE HALE ★ MY LITTLE MARGIE ★ ROCKY LANE ★ SIX-GUN HEROES ★ SOLDIER and MARINE ★ SPACE ADVENTURES—ROCKY JONES, SPACE RANGER ★ SWEETHEARTS ★ TEX RITTER ★ This is SUSPENSE ★ TRUE LIFE SECRETS ★ TV TEENS—DON WINSLOW of the NAVY ★ WIN-A-PRIZE ★ ZOO FUNNIES, NYOKA, JUNGLE EMBL

Every effort is made to insure that these comic magazines contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment.



MEXICO had many cruel bandit leaders who waged bloody revolutions! But none could equal the swaggering firebrand, **EL LEON!** With the cruel wiles of his jungle namesake, this evil genius aroused the peasantry of Acatera Province to a savage uprising! The beautiful Carlotta Montes, gunrunner for the revolution, would have given her life in his cause... until Monte Hale intervened!

A few miles above the Mexican border, a terrified woman lashes a team of thundering horses!

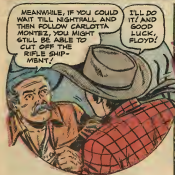
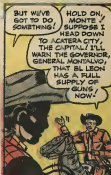
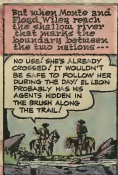
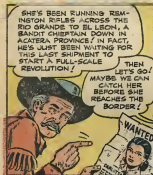
FASTER!
YOU MUST GO FASTER, MY FRIENDS!

And riding close behind her--

STOP!
PULL UP--OR THIS TIME I'LL AIM LOWER!







I WAS ALMOST STOPPED, MI AMIGO! BUT I MANAGED TO GET THROUGH WITH THE RIFLES!

YOU ARE A BRAVE GIRL, CARLOTTA! TONIGHT WE WILL STRIKE AND OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT!



At dawn, as Monte Hale cautiously rides through the chaparral far to the south of the Rio Grande...

GREAT DAY! THE UPRISING HAS BEGUN! CARLOTTA MUST HAVE GOTTEN THE RIFLES THROUGH!



I RECKON I'LL KEEP GOING UNTIL I CAN MAKE CONTACT WITH EL LEON'S FORCES AND SEE WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT! I FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING LET THOSE SMUGGLED RIFLES GET THROUGH!



As Monte rides through the day, he sees many grim and terrible sights!

PARD, THIS SURE IS TERRIBLE! THE REBEL TROOPS HAVE SLAUGHTERED HUNDREDS OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THESE VILLAGES! LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND OUT FROM THOSE PEOPLE HIDING OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE!



SEÑOR, DO NOT HARM US! HAVE PITY ON THESE CHILDREN AND OLD PEOPLE!

DON'T WORRY, MISTER! I'M NOT MIXED UP IN THIS RUCKUS! BUT TELL ME, DID EL LEON'S SOLDIERS DO ALL THIS?



SOLDIERS? THEY ARE CUTTHROATS AND THIEVES! THEY MASSACRED OUR FAMILIES AND ROBBED AND LOOTED OUR HOMES!

GENERAL MONTALVO IS A GOOD GOVERNOR! HE IS KIND AND HONEST! BUT IF EL LEON TAKES OVER, OUR LIVES WILL BE RUINED! HE LOOKS LIKE AN ANGEL, BUT HE HAS THE BLACK HEART OF A DEVIL!



As Monte rides on...

I'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING! MAYBE THIS BANDIT CHIEF DOESN'T REALIZE WHAT HIS TROOPS ARE DOING. I MAY BE ABLE TO TELL HIM AND HAVE HIM STOP THESE ATROCITIES!



But as Monte cautiously approaches the rebel camp at nightfall...

LOOK! A GRINGO SNEAKING UP ON US!

CAPTURE HIM AND TAKE HIM TO EL LEON!





standing like a mighty colossus, Monte staves off the rush of furious rebels! But suddenly--

WELL DONE, MY LEADER! THIS GRINGO IS AS BIG AS A BULL AND AS MEAN AS A WILDCAT!



TAKE THIS INTRUDER-- SHOOT HIM AND LEAVE HIM FOR THE BUZZARDS!

WAIT, EL LEON! LISTEN! THIS IS THE FOOLISH AMERICAN WHO HELPED ME GET ACROSS THE BORDER SAFELY! HE MUST HAVE FOLLOWED ME TO YOU! WHY NOT LOCK HIM UP AND KEEP HIM AS A HOSTAGE?



BUENO! WHEN I HAVE CAPTURED ACATERA CITY I WILL HAVE HIM EXECUTED! THROW HIM IN THE PRISON!



That night, in the adobe prison hut--

THE REBEL TROOPS ARE GETTING READY TO MOVE! EVIDENTLY SOMETHING BIG IS GOING TO HAPPEN! I WONDER IF FLOYD WILBY REACHED GENERAL MONTALVO SAFELY?



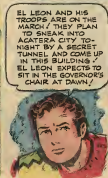
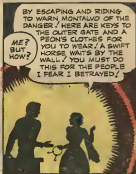
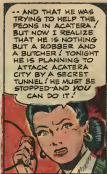
Suddenly--

CLICK!



SOMEONE'S COMING IN! IT'S CARLOTTA MONTEZ!

DO NOT MAKE A SOUND, SEÑOR! I MUST TALK WITH YOU!



Soon, in the secret tunnel--

CARLOTTA, HEAR ME!
THAT GRINGO ESCAPED
AND I FEAR YOU
HELPED HIM! IF
THIS IS A TRAP, I
YOU SHALL DIE.

BE
CAREFUL,
EL LEON! WE
ARE ALMOST IN
THE GOVERNOR'S
PALACE!



As the rebel
troops emerge--

FOR
FREEDOM
AND JUSTICE
-- FIRE!

AAAGGH!



WE ARE BETRAYED,
EL LEON! WE WILL
BE WIPED OUT!

BANG!
CARRAMBA!
I FEARED
THIS!



YOU WERE
WARNED,
CARLOTTA!
NOW DIE!



No sooner has El Leon
fired than a gun
barks in answer!

NOW IT IS
YOUR TURN,
TRAITOR!

AGH!



THEY ARE
SURRENDERING,
HALE! WITH EL
LEON SLAIN,
THEY HAVE NO
COURAGE!

RIGHT, GENERAL!
BUT LOOK
WHERE HE
DIED--IN THE
CHAIR OF THE
GOVERNOR!
WE REACHED IT
AT LAST, BUT HE
WILL NEVER RULE
FROM IT!



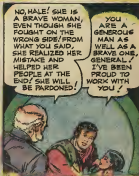
AND
CARLOTTA
MONTEZ?

THE WOUND
DOESN'T SEEM
TO BE TOO BAD!
GENERAL, WHAT
WILL HAPPEN TO
HER? WILL SHE
BE EXECUTED?



NO, HALE! SHE IS
A BRAVE WOMAN,
EVEN THOUGH SHE
FOUGHT ON THE
WRONG SIDE! FROM
WHAT YOU SAID,
SHE REALIZED HER
MISTAKE AND
HELPED HER
PEOPLE AT THE
END! SHE WILL
BE PARDONED.

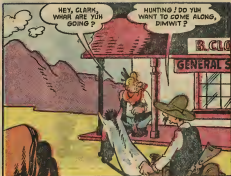
YOU
ARE A
GENEROUS
MAN AS
WELL AS A
BRAVE ONE,
GENERAL.
I'VE BEEN
PROUD TO
WORK WITH
YOU!



DIMWIT DIDDLE



A GOOD POINT!



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NOW AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND!

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GABBY HAYES

and **FEARLESS FUDGY**

DON'T DARE
BUDGE!
GIVE ME
YORE FUDGE!

I'LL SET A TRAP
FOR THAT FUDGE
BURGLAR OR MY
NAME ISN'T
AUNT NESTER!

I'LL FERRET OUT
THAT FUDGE FLEEGER
OR MY NAME AIN'T
GABBY HAYES!

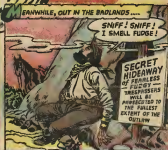


NESTER, THIS
HERE FUDGE
IS FIT FOR A
JUDGE!

OH, GABBY! YOU MAKE
ME SO FLUTTERY WITH
YOUR FLATTERY!



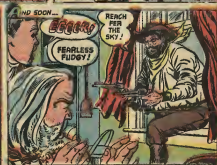
SHAKE A LEG,
HORSE! I SMELL
FUDGE AT THE
BAR NOTHING
RANCH!



MEANWHILE, OUT IN THE BADLANDS....

SNIFF! SNIFF!
I SMELL FUDGE!

**SECRET
HIDEAWAY
OF
FEARLESS
FUDGY—
TRASPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED TO
THE FULLEST
EXTENT OF THE
OUTLAW**



AND SOON...

**FEARLESS
FUDGY!**

**FEARLESS
FUDGY!**

REACH
FOR
THE
SKY!







MONTE HALE

GRUBSTAKER'S BARGAIN

IT'S MONTE HALE, ALL RIGHT, BOSS!

THEN WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, YOU LUNKHEADS? BURY HIM ALIVE!

For many years, the lonely prospectors who combed the West in search of pay-dirt, have been befriended by men who would set them up with equipment and supplies. Crackerbarrel Caulkins was such a grubstaker! Or so it seemed -- until one morning when Monte Hale stood in a deserted mine shaft, staring up at a ruthless figure that menaced his life!

Crackerbarrel Caulkins played a trading post in the Brazos country -- where every man knew and liked him!

HOWDY, BOYS! HELP YOURSELF TO SOME CRACKERS AND SET DOWN FOR A SPELL! MIGHT AS WELL RELAX ONCE IN A WHILE!

THAT'S RIGHT, CRACKER-BARREL! AND YOU SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THE REST OF US!

WELL, I JEST NEVER DID LIKE TO WORK! BUT IF ANY OF YOU HOMBRES EVER WANT TO SET OUT PROSPECTING, REMEMBER I'LL ALWAYS BE WILLING TO GRUBSTAKE YOU!

YOU'VE STAKED MORE SOURDOUGHS TO VITTLES AND MINING SUPPLIES THAN ANY OTHER TRADER IN THESE PARTS, CRACKER-BARREL!

YOU'RE A MIGHTY GENEROUS MAN!



Monte Hale had always felt as other men did about Crackerbarrel Caulkins! But one night, as Monte lay curled up in his sleeping bag---

MONTE!
WAKE
UP!

HUH?

WHO ARE--WELL,
JINGLING SPURS!
IT'S A
GIRL!

THAT'S
RIGHT,
MONTE!
I'M JEAN
CARTRIGHT,
AND I NEED
YOUR HELP!

JEAN CARTRIGHT? THAT
NAME SURE SOUNDS
FAMILIAR! DIDN'T YOU
AND YOUR
BROTHER
COME TO
BRAZOS
A WHILE
BACK?

YES, AND
THAT'S WHAT
I WANTED
TO TALK TO
YOU ABOUT!

KEN AND I DID
SOME PROSPECTING
UNTIL WE RAN OUT
OF MONEY! THEN
WE WENT TO
CRACKERBARREL
CAULKINS FOR
HELP!

GOOD OLD
CRACKER-
BARREL! I
RECKON HE'S
THE MOST
GENEROUS SOUL
IN THESE PARTS!
DID HE STAKE
YOU?

HE SURE DID! WE
AGREED THAT IF
WE FOUND ORE,
WE'D SPLIT EVEN
WITH HIM! AND
THIS TIME WE HIT
A RICH VEIN! WE
REPORTED TO
CRACKERBARREL---

"--AND HE WAS MIGHTY GLAD TO
HEAR ABOUT THE STRIKE!"

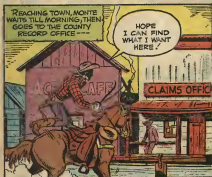
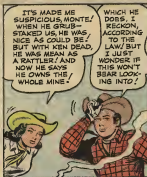
GREAT WORK, KIDS!
WE'LL START MINING
IMMEDIATELY ON A
BIG SCALE!
WE'LL SPLIT
EVERYTHING
EQUALLY!

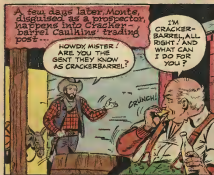
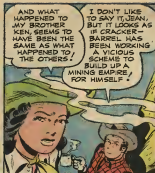
GOOD
ENOUGH!
YOU'VE SURE
BEEN KIND TO
US, CRACKER-
BARREL!

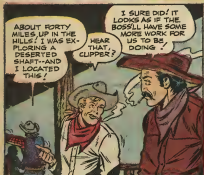
BUT THAT VERY
NIGHT, KEN WAS HIT
BY A RUNAWAY
WAGON AND
KILLED!

I'M SORRY, JEAN!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN
A TERRIBLE SHOCK TO
YOU, LOSING YOUR
BROTHER LIKE THAT!
BUT THEN WHAT
HAPPENED?

I WENT TO CRACKER-
BARREL! HE SAID THAT
KEN HAD BEEN HIS ONLY
PARTNER IN THE SILVER
MINE, AND NOW, SINCE
KEN WAS DEAD, HE
WAS THE SOLE
OWNER!







But when Monte is out of sight—



The next day, as Monte plods beneath a broiling sun--

HMMH! BY TURNING MY HEAD SLIGHTLY I CAN SEE BEHIND ME, AND WAY BACK THERE ARE A BUNCH OF RIDERS FOLLOWING ME!

WHICH MEANS I'LL HAVE TO PLAY MY CARDS RIGHT IF I AIM TO COME OUT HOLDING THE WINNING HAND! I'LL SOON BE AT THE OLD MINE SHAFT--AND THAT'LL BE THE START OF THE FRACAS!

GOT TO WORK FAST! I'LL RIG THIS SCAFFOLDING UP CLOSE TO THE SHAFT! THEN WHEN CRACKER-BARREL AND THE OTHERS ARRIVE--THING'LL BEGIN TO POP!

An hour later--

HE'S GONE DOWN IN THE SHAFT, BOSS! HE'LL BE A CINCH TO FINISH OFF DOWN THERE.

THEN LET'S DO IT! AND REMEMBER, CLIPPER, IT'LL HAVE TO LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT.

MOOSE! RAISE YOUR HANDS PRONTO OR WE'LL GUN YOU!

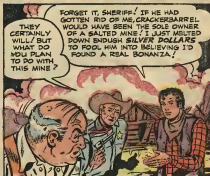
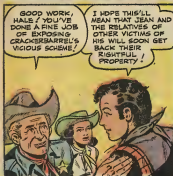
CRACKER-BARREL, I DON'T GET THIS!

OF COURSE YOU DON'T! THEY NEVER DO UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE! ALL RIGHT, BOYS! DUMP A PILE OF ORE DOWN ON HIM! IT'LL LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENTAL SLIDE!

HERE WE GO!

But as the murderous things come shoveling--Monte moves swiftly.

RECKON IT'S TIME FOR ME TO DO THIS!



WAHITA MERCY

A Gray Hawk Story



OVER THE PRAIRIE land, the buffalo grass rippled softly in a gentle, curving movement. Slowly, Gray Hawk and the other Otapi youths crawled forward. As they moved through the high grass, their keen dark eyes roved from right to left, exploring the terrain. They were searching for two things—the buffalo herd so badly needed for food by their tribesmen, and for sign of the cruel Wahita warriors who ruled the prairie. Suddenly as they crawled forward, one of the Otapi boys lifted a trembling hand . . .

"Stop!" he whispered urgently. "Up in that clump of pin oak—over the ridge! I see something moving! Perhaps it is a Wahita scout!"

Gray Hawk squinted his eyes toward the distant grove. "I see nothing," he decided. "Probably it was just the wind, Little Bear. Let us keep moving."

Again the dusky striplings crawled through the grass but as they approached the clump of pin oaks, a blood-curdling cry rent the air! It was the war challenge of the Wahitas—the rulers of the plains country! At once, a number of brilliantly feather and be-daubed warriors sprang up from hiding!

"There are too many for us!" cried Gray Hawk. "And look! They are led by Sharp Lance himself! Quick! Let us flee!"

Whirling about with the grace of a forest creature, Gray Hawk sped away. His long sinewy legs pumping frantically, he was soon out of bow-range of the enemy Wahitas. But even as he sprinted down a trampled buffalo wallow, Gray Hawk realized that he was alone. Turning and looking back, he saw that his friends had been captured by the plains warriors!

For a moment, realizing that it was his foolhardiness that had led the Otapi youths into an ambush, Gray Hawk felt the wild impulse to attempt to free them in a sudden surprise attack! But then, better sense prevailing, he crouched beside an elderberry bush and watched, his eyes slitted . . .

"They have not harmed Little Bear and the others thus far," he mused to himself. Evidently they are going to take them back to their village." His fists clenched with anger and desperation. "I will trail them! Somehow,

I will set them free—or I will die with them!"

As the towering, broad-shouldered Wahita braves paced along the prairie with their bound prisoners, Gray Hawk followed them, being careful to stay a considerable distance behind.

Even at this distance, however, he could make out distinctly the giant form of the cruel chief known as Sharp Lance. He could envision the jagged scar slashed on the side of his face that he had once obtained in battle with the Otapi tribe. He could even glimpse the white bracelet worn about his wrist—the bracelet that men said Sharp Lance had carved from the skull bone of a slain foe! With every step, Gray Hawk felt the pangs of terror stabbing at him. But he had no choice. His friends had been captured—and it was his fault. He had to rescue them!

That night the Wahita war party reached its village, set in a narrow valley in the foothills of the Gran' Pere range.

The Otapi youths were freed of their cruel bonds and flung bodily into a long bark hut—a prison chamber which was much like the ceremonial huts built by the Eastern Indians. Wriggling stealthily through the clustering mountain laurel that surrounded the camp, Gray Hawk soon reached the prison hut.

Crouching by it, he tapped lightly on its bark side. Within a moment, he was answered by a tapping from within.

"Hello! Hello in there," he hissed sibilantly.

"Who is that?" came the answer.

"Gray Hawk! Listen," he continued, "I am going to try to get you out of there! This hut is too strongly built for me to cut a hole—and the foundation is probably too deep to burrow under. So I will build a fire against the side. Soon it will flare up . . . and a hole will be opened. You must break through as soon as it is weakened enough. When you are clear, scatter and return to our village one by one! Do you understand?"

"Yes! It is well!" came the soft reply.

Quickly, Gray Hawk knelt by the rough bark siding of the hut. He shredded some of the bark with his keen edged knife and crumpled dried moss beneath it. With his flint and steel he struck a spark. The tiny orange fire caught—and grew. Soon it was licking up the side

of the bark hut. Within a few moments, the blaze was growing, catching hungrily at the hickory struts of the hut, swarming wider and wider.

Praying that the blaze would not be detected until his friends had escaped, Gray Hawk sprang backward into the brush.

Now the fire rose higher, and higher! Soon its angry crackling was audible to the ear! Just as the first Otapi youth came lunging through the hole that had been created, Gray Hawk heard a shout of alarm from the center of the Wahita village.

"A fire! There is a fire in the prison hut!"

But now, one by one, the Otapi boys were hurtling swiftly through the flaming hole in the side of the hut! They were singed and burned slightly—but they were not seriously hurt. As they disappeared in the night, Gray Hawk, waiting there, smiled. He saw the aroused Wahita braves, wielding weapons, race in furious pursuit. But he knew that sheltered by the black night and with a head start, his friends would have an excellent chance of escaping! His plan had worked!

Now it was time for him to flee, before the enraged Wahita braves returned.

Turning to slip, fox-like, through the brush, Gray Hawk suddenly heard a frightened cry behind him. Whirling, he saw that the sparks from the prison hut had dropped onto the thatched roof of the hut next to it. Quickly these new flames had spread, until the entire side of this hut was a blazing wall! Through the fire, Gray Hawk could see a woman and a child. Evidently they were terrified by the crackling of the flames and the searing heat of the licking, crimson tongues of fire.

They were trapped in the hut! For a moment Gray Hawk hesitated. After all, these people were the blood of his enemies. Why should he help them? But then, he decided, if they were his mother and his brother, he could not see them suffer such a terrible fate.

Snatching up a long timber that lay on the ground, Gray Hawk wielded it savagely. Within a few moments, he had knocked open a narrow section in the wall—wide enough for them to come through.

"Now!" he cupped his hands and shouted. "Come out! Escape."

But, paralyzed by fear, they did not move. Gray Hawk realized that he would have to go in to get them. Muscles tensing, he sprang through the opening into the inferno. With the heat searing his skin, he seized the woman and her child and pulled them toward the open-

ing. Then, just as he thrust them through, he saw one of the roof timbers of the hut falling toward him! Desperately, he attempted to dodge it, but he was too late! Showering sparks, the timber slammed against his head and shoulder, throwing him to the ground. The brutal impact sent the boy into a drifting, eddying maze of unconsciousness and pain. He lay there, dazed, as the flames licked about him...

When consciousness returned to the Otapi youth, he realized that he was lying safely on the grass outside, in the cool night air. But, looking up, he saw towering over him the giant form of Sharp Lance, chief of the Wahitas! And hulking impassively behind their leader were the other braves of the plains tribe.

Sharp Lance scowled down at Gray Hawk. "You! Otapi spawn! You are the one who followed your captive fellows here—and who built the fire to free them! Is that true?"

Weary muscles responding, Gray Hawk forced himself to stand up. "That is... so..." he replied.

The mighty chief's face was like a graven image of stone—with the single frightening scar looking like a slip of the sculptor's tool. He frowned. "And when you had set them free, boy, you returned, to rescue the squaw, and the child who were in the next hut. Is that so?"

Gray Hawk inclined his head. "That is... so..." he muttered again.

SUDDENLY, he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder. Looking up, he saw with amazement that Sharp Lance was smiling at him. "Listen, boy," the Wahita chief said, "that woman was my squaw! And that boy was my son—some day to be ruler of these plains. You saved them both... and we owe you an eternal debt!" Quickly, he drew the carved bone bracelet from his wrist. "Take this, lad! Return with it to your people, and show it to them as an evidence of our lasting gratitude and our friendship. Tell them that never again need there be war between the Wahitas and the Otapi! Now, go..."

As Gray Hawk turned and, smiling, ran for the forest edge, he could feel the bracelet gripped between his slender fingers. Now, he knew it was too big for him. But some day, he declared, he would wear it, and it would fit him well...

THE END

Don't miss the exciting GRAY HAWK
adventure each month in MONTE HALE
WESTERN.

BRINKO BETSY

WELL NAMED!

WHY ARE YOU
LATE THIS
MORNING?

ER, ER, I WAS
READING MY
GEOGRAPHY LESSON
AND I GOT SO
INTERESTED I
FORGOT WHAT
TIME IT WAS!

OH, YOU GOT SO INTERESTED
IN YOUR GEOGRAPHY LESSON,
YOU FORGOT THE TIME! WELL,
I'LL SOON FIND OUT IF YOU'RE
TELLING THE TRUTH!

GULP!

NAME SIX WILD
ANIMALS FOUND
IN AFRICA!

(ULP)
ER, ER...

COME NOW, BETSY! IF YOU READ
YOUR GEOGRAPHY LESSON LIKE YOU
SAID, YOU CERTAINLY SHOULD BE
ABLE TO NAME SIX WILD
ANIMALS!

ER, ER, I CAN
TEACHER...

---FOUR LIONS AND
TWO ELEPHANTS!

HA!
HA!

THE BLUE BEETLE

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OF
LAW AND ORDER

10¢ NOW AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND! 10¢

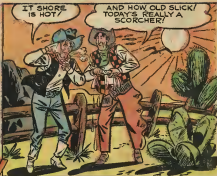


OLD SLICK

ICE WATER!

IT SHORE IS HOT!

AND HOW OLD SLICK! TODAY'S REALLY A SCORCHER!



YUH KNOW WHAT I WISH I HAD?

WHAT?



A GLASS OF ICE WATER! (SIGH) BUT I MIGHT AS WELL WISH FOR THE MOON! THAT'S HOW MUCH OF A CHANCE I HAVE OF GETTING SOME ICE WATER OUT HYAR!



I WOULDN'T SAY THAT! YUH CAN GET SOME ICE WATER HYAR!



EAT THIS ONION...



..AND IT'LL MAKE YOUR EYES WATER (ICE WATER)! **WUP**



OLD SLICK



MY CHICKEN COOP HAS BEEN
RAIDED AGAIN! SOME NO GOOD, DARNERY
CROOK CLEARED IT OUT!



I HAVE A GOOD IDEA WHO'S
BEEN STEALING MY CHICKENS---
HANK PRINGLE!



I HAVEN'T ANY PROOF, BUT I'M
SURE HE'S THE GUILTY CRITTER!
I RECKON I'LL GO SEE HIM!



ANYONE FOUND PROWLING AROUND
MY CHICKEN HOUSE LATE AT NIGHT
WILL BE STILL THERE NEXT
MORNING! AND WHEN I
SAY STILL...



---I MEAN
STILL!

(GULP) I'LL
NEVER STEAL
HIS CHICKENS
AGAIN!



MONTE HALE

in THE BUILDING OF SHANDA DAM



For centuries America's western lands suffered from terrible droughts and floods. To protect themselves against these ravages of nature, the farmers of Shanda Valley determined to build a huge dam! But power-proud cattlemen joined to prevent its completion! Shanda Valley trembled with the threat of a range war until Monte Hale raced Fardner toward a fury-filled, torrent-lashed fight to the finish!

ONE DAY,
HIGH IN THE
ROCKIES---

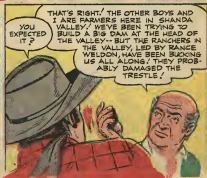
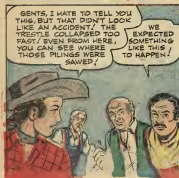
SLOW
THERE,
MULE!

CAREFUL, JOSH!
WE'VE GOT NOTHING
BUT PINE BOARDS
AND A FEW STRONG
PILINGS BETWEEN US,
AND THE HEREAFTER.

MEANWHILE,
ON A NEARBY
TRAIL---

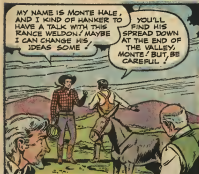
GREAT DAY!
LOOK THERE, PARD!
THAT TRESTLE'S
COLLAPSING--AND
THE MEN ON IT ARE
FALLING INTO THE
RAVINE BELOW!

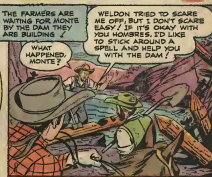
CR-RASH!



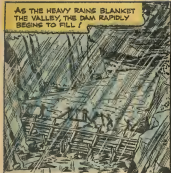
WE NEED THE DAM TO PROTECT US FROM FLOODS AND TO SAVE WATER FOR IRRIGATION IN TIME OF DROUGHT! BUT THE CATTLEMEN MOSTLY HAVE ENOUGH NATURAL SPRINGS TO GIVE THEM GRAZING WATER!

WELDON AND THE OTHERS FIGURE IF THEY CAN FORCE US OUT OF THE VALLEY, THEY'LL HAVE ALL THE LAND FOR THEMSELVES! THEY EVEN HIRED A BAND OF BORDER GUNSLUCKS TO DO THEIR BLOOD-SPILLING FOR THEM!





AS THE HEAVY RAIN BLANKET THE VALLEY, THE DAM RAPIDLY BEGINS TO FILL!



SUDDENLY!

SNIPERS!
BELOW US
ON THE
MOUNTAIN-
SIDE!

MUST BE RANCE
WELDON'S MEN!
THEY ARE HOLED
UP SO WE CAN'T
SEE THEM--AND
THEY AIM TO GUN
US DOWN!

BANG!
BANG!



LET'S FLUSH THEM OUT
PRONTO! I'LL TAKE THIS
END OF THE SAW AND
YOU TWO GENTS
GRAB THE OTHER
END! WE'LL LOWER
THE BOOM
ON THEM!



AS THE WELL-HIDDEN OUTLAWS
CONTINUE THEIR FIRE, THE
GIANT PINE BEGINS
TO TOPPLE ---

CRAACK!

WELDON!
LOOK! THAT
PINE! IT'S
COMING
DOWN---



RUN
FOR YOUR
LIVES!

KARASH!



THAT'LL TEACH WELDON
AND HIS OWLHOODS TO
LEAVE OUR DAM ALONE!

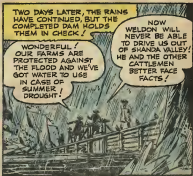
I HOPE SO!
BUT I'VE GOT
A HUNCH HE'S
GOT ONE MORE
ACE UP HIS
SLEEVE!



TWO DAYS LATER, THE RAINS
HAVE CONTINUED, BUT THE
COMPLETED DAM HOLDS
THEM IN CHECK!

WONDERFUL!
OUR FARMS ARE
PROTECTED AGAINST
THE FLOOD AND WE'VE
GOT WATER TO USE
IN CASE OF
SUMMER
DROUGHT!

NOW
WELDON WILL
NEVER BE ABLE
TO DRIVE US OUT
OF SHANDA VALLEY!
HE AND THE OTHER
CATTLEMEN
BETTER FACE
FACTS!



BUT THEN--

LISTEN! SOMEONE'S COMING UP THE PATH FROM THE VALLEY FLOOR!

GET YOUR RIFLES READY! BUT DON'T SHOOT UNLESS HE ASKS FOR TROUBLE!

IT'S SAM BOONE!

DON'T SHOOT, I'VE GOT MY KIDS WITH ME! I AM TO WARN YOU ABOUT RANCE WELDON'S PLANS!

RANCE AND HIS GUN-RANNIES HAVE HIKEED UP OVER THE MOUNTAIN AND ARE GOING TO DYNAMITE YOUR DAM FROM ABOVE! YOU'VE GOT ONLY A FEW MINUTES TO STOP THEM!

HOLD ON, BOONE! HOW COME YOU'RE TELLING US THIS?

I WAS FORCED TO GO ALONG WITH WELDON AND THE OTHER CATTLEMEN! BUT IF HE EXPLODES THE DAM, MY RANCH WILL BE WASHED AWAY BY THE FLOOD! I HAD TO JOIN YOUR SIDE AND WARN YOU!

THEN LET'S GET AFTER WELDON AND HIS GANG! WE CAN STAY UNDER COVER GOING UP THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE!

MEANWHILE---

LIGHT THE FUSE AND LOWER THE DYNAMITE DOWN OVER THE DAM. IT'LL BLAST IT TO BITS AND COVER THE FARMLAND WITH WATER!

AND WE'LL BE PROTECTED FROM THE EXPLOSION-- AND FROM HALE AND THOSE FLOWHANDS!

LOWER AND LOWER SWINGS THE DYNAMITE --- AND THE FUSE SPUTTERS CLOSER AND CLOSER TO IT'S DEADLY COMPANION!

BUT SUDDENLY---

THAT'S ENOUGH! GET BUSY, WELDON, AND HOIST THAT LOAD OF DYNAMITE BACK UP!

HALE! NO! WE CAN'T! IT'LL KILL US ALL BEFORE WE CAN PUT OUT THE FUSE!



YOU DON'T
HAVE ANY
CHOICE,
WELDON!
GET TO
WORK!

A-ALL
RIGHT,
HALE!



BUT AS THE DYNAMITE
LOAD RISES TOWARD
THE LEDGE, THE FUSE
REACHES ITS END,
AND---



WHOW! THAT
KNOCKED ME FOR
A LOOP! BUT IT
SAVED THE DAM.
WHERE'S
WELDON?

HE AND HIS
GANG WERE'NT
AS CLOSE TO
THE LEDGE AS
WE WERE AND
THEY RECOVERED
FASTER! THEY
HEADED DOWN
THE MOUNTAIN!



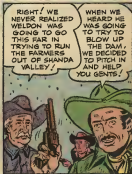
SHAKE
A LEG!
AFTER
THEM!



BUT AS MONTE HALE AND HIS
FRIENDS PURSUE THEIR FOES---

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO HURRY,
HALE! WE'RE
HOLDING THESE
VARMINTS FOR
YOU!

MONTE! IT'S
THE REST OF
THE CATTLEMEN
FROM DOWN IN
THE VALLEY!
THEY'VE JOINED
US!



RIGHT! WE
NEVER REALIZED
WELDON WAS
GOING TO GO
THIS FAR IN
TRYING TO RUN
THE FARMERS
OUT OF SHANDA
VALLEY!

WHEN WE
HEARD HE
WAS GOING
TO TRY TO
BLOW UP
THE DAM,
WE DECIDED
TO PITCH IN
AND HELP
YOU GENTS!



MEN, YOU'VE MADE A GOOD
CHOICE! WELDON AND HIS
HIRED GUNMEN WILL GO TO
PRISON, AND I HOPE THAT THE
REST OF YOU WILL ALL BE
ABLE TO LIVE AS GOOD
NEIGHBORS!



THIS DAM YOU FARMERS
HAVE BUILT WILL BENEFIT
THE ENTIRE VALLEY, AND
WE'RE GOING TO HELP YOU
PROTECT AND KEEP IT UP!
SHANDA VALLEY'S GOING
TO BE A MIGHTY FINE
PLACE TO LIVE FROM
NOW ON!

WE
SURE WILL,
MONTE,
THANKS TO
YOU!

TEN GALLON TEX

"A MATTER OF PRIDE!"



MOLASSES MOUTH



WHAT A WASTE!



